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QUESTION OF THE VIOLATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS IN THE OCCUPIED ARAB TERRITORIES, INCLUDING PALESTINE

Written statement submitted by the Organization for Defending Victims of Violence, a non-governmental organization in special consultative status

The Secretary-General has received the following written statement which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1996/31.

[1 January 2000]

GE.00-10636 (E)

1. Since the occupation of Palestine by the Zionists, the original inhabitants of this land have suffered from many losses, injuries and problems. The consequences of this painful historical incident have been the occupation of the land, homelessness of several million Palestinians, savage killings, exile, torture, murder and kidnapping. While the Zionist regime has been breaching all the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council, it has never suffered the least real penalty and economic sanctions. This means that the Western countries, in particular the United States of America, due to the strategic role of the Zionists in the dominance policy of the Western countries, have always supported this regime. For instance, when on 22 December 1955, a draft resolution was submitted to the Security Council containing the recommendation "to expel Israel from the United Nations under Article 6 of the United Nations Charter for her persistent violation of the principles of the Charter", the Security Council did not vote on it (source : United Nations Doc. S/3519). The double standard (more forbearance regarding Israel on one hand, and severe condemnation of other third world countries which violate human rights principles, on the other) concerning the issue of the Palestinians and the occupation of their land has encouraged the Zionists to systematically violate human rights and fundamental freedoms.

2. As reported by the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Palestinian territories occupied since 1967, "The interrogation methods used by the Israeli General Security Service (GSS) with regard to Palestinian detainees and prisoners suspected of alleged security offences have remained the same. The Special Rapporteur was informed that the new development in this connection was that the GSS had stopped denying that it resorts to such methods. (E/CN.4/1999/24, para. 33). There are many cases of torture, but here, we would like to quote a news item released by the Palestinian Human Rights Monitoring Group on 10 December 1999 regarding the torture of three young Palestinian men from Bethlehem who have been severely tortured in the Russian Compound prison in Jerusalem. Mohammed Ali Hameid Souman, 17 years old from Braitha'a, al-Ta'amreh, in Bethlehem, was arrested in his home on 24 August 1999 and taken to the Russian Compound prison in Jerusalem, where he was interrogated for 55 days. The first 25 days he was tortured severely. They covered his head with a dirty bag and forced him to sit in painful positions (Shabeh) for long periods of time. Further, they forced him into a very small and narrow cupboard where he could not move at all. The torture made Mohammed confess to charges of trying to purchase guns, throwing stones and being a member of the Islamic Jihad movement. His lawyer was not allowed to meet Mohammad until 40 days after his arrest. The second person is Ali Issa al-Wahsh, 20 years old, from al-Ta'amreh, Bethlehem, who was also arrested at his home the night of 24 August 1999 and taken first to 'Atzion and then transferred to the Russian Compound prison in Jerusalem. He was interrogated here for 70 days, being beaten and tortured severely. He was not allowed to use the toilet for some days, and his health deteriorated. He was not taken to hospital. As a result of the torture, Ali confessed that he was a member of Islamic Jihad, possessing and dealing with weapons. His trial was supposed to take place on 16 December 1999. The third Palestinian is Ra'ed Ahmad Salem al-Hamri, 19 years old, from Braitha'a, al-Ta'amreh, in Bethlehem, who was arrested from his home on 21 August 1999. He spent the first night in 'Atzion and was then taken to the Russian Compound where he spent 62 days in interrogation. He was beaten and

tortured, they put burning cigarettes on his body and forced him to sit in painful positions (Shabeh). During the interrogation, he was hospitalized at "Pikur Holem" on 22 September 1999 because his health had deteriorated badly during the detention. They accused him of membership in Islamic groups, of dealing with weapons and throwing stones. As a result of the torture, he confessed to the charges.

3. Other violations of human rights in Israel are the arbitrary repeated arrests and detentions, long-term imprisonments and keeping the detainees without any sentence for long terms. With the excuse of maintaining security, the general freedoms of the Palestinians and their right to life are violated by the Israeli police. Extensive arrests without any charges and trials without lawyers are common procedures in the Israeli courts. Unfortunately, the repeated reports of human rights bodies on the conditions in Israel prisons, and especially in Khiam prison, with more than 5,000 detainees, have not yet been effective. Extrajudicial executions, a breach of the right to life, is another example of Israeli violation of human rights. For instance, on 15 December 1999, Human Rights Watch called for an independent inquiry into the Monday night killings of two Palestinian men, 'Iyad al-Battat and Nadir al-Massalmah (13 December 1999). As reported by Human Rights Watch, on Tuesday, 14 December 1999, Israeli Deputy Defence Minister Efraim Sneh described the deaths as the result of a "contract" by the Israeli Defence Force (IDF), implying that the killings were extrajudicial executions and that there was no effort to detain the suspects for prosecution. These killings are extrajudicial executions which are flagrant breaches of international human rights standards.

4. There are not just Muslims and Arab Palestinians whose rights are violated in occupied Palestine. The rights of Jews are also violated extensively, since there are racial discrimination policies imposed by the authorities of occupied Palestine towards Jews from the West and those from the East. This discriminatory treatment has repeatedly caused protests and strikes of the Jews form the East.

5. The Organization Defending Victims of Violence condemns the systematic violations of human rights in occupied Palestine and requests the Commission on Human Rights to encourage the States not to continue the policies of double standard and condemn strongly the violations of human rights in occupied Palestine.